



Wales Infected Blood Support Scheme (WIBSS)

What if I have never claimed from WIBSS or any other UK scheme?

If you have recently been diagnosed with Hepatitis C or have not applied earlier for other reasons, you can fill in an application form to become a beneficiary of the Wales Infected Blood Support Scheme (WIBSS). This only applies if you think you were infected as a result of receiving infected NHS blood, tissue or blood products in the UK before September 1991 or if you were infected by someone who had received infected blood and is currently a beneficiary of WIBSS or one of the previous schemes.

Application forms are available on the WIBSS website. Please contact WIBSS if you have any queries; are not sure which form to complete; or would like help with completing the forms. If you require a hard copy of the form, please contact WIBSS and one will be sent to you in the post.

Medical Information

Once you have completed your form you should pass it to the doctor who is treating your Hepatitis C infection – this should normally be a Hepatitis C clinical specialist (either a Hepatologist or an infectious diseases consultant), although it could be your GP if you have not seen a specialist. If you have any relevant medical records (for example that show you had a blood transfusion), please ensure your doctor has a copy of these.

You doctor will be asked to complete information confirming that you are infected with Hepatitis C and to provide relevant information on any records which would indicate you received a blood transfusion, blood products or a tissue transplant, within the specified timeframe, as well as any other relevant information available. If you have Stage II advanced Hepatitis C, then they will also need to provide some additional clinical information (such as evidence that you have cirrhosis of the liver, liver cancer, B cell non-Hodgkin's lymphoma or that you are on the waiting list for or have had a liver transplant). They should then return the completed form to WIBSS, details of which are listed on the relevant application form.

WIBSS will aim to provide a decision on all applications within 25 working days, although it may take longer if they need to ask you or your doctor for any additional information.



Full Eligibility Criteria – New Applicants

For people who were directly infected with Hepatitis C by NHS blood, tissue or blood products you should be able to confirm all of the following:

- You are infected with either Stage I (chronic) or Stage II (advanced) hepatitis C. Please note; you may still qualify for the scheme if your hepatitis C infection has been successfully treated.
- You were in Wales when you became infected and you have not already received any payments from another UK scheme and are not currently eligible to receive funds from another scheme (either the Skipton Fund or any other scheme which replaces it.)
- On the balance of probabilities, you were infected with hepatitis C as a result of receiving treatment in the UK before September 1991 from the NHS in the form of either a blood transfusion, a tissue transplant or blood products (see below for more details on what this covers).

For people who were infected by someone who had received NHS blood, tissue or blood products you will need to confirm all of the following:

- On the balance of probabilities, you were infected with Hepatitis C and/or HIV by someone who was infected via NHS blood, tissue or blood products.
- That person has received payments from WIBSS or, alternatively, has received payments from the Skipton Fund as a Welsh beneficiary. If they have not yet made an application to receive a payment, they will need to apply and their application will need to be considered before WIBSS can consider your application.
- You were either married to, in a civil partnership with or living together in a long-term relationship with the person who infected you at the time you were infected **or** you were infected by your mother when you were a baby.
- You were infected due to either sexual transmission, transmission from mother to baby or an accidental needle-stick injury, although you would not be eligible if you were an injecting drug user and were sharing needles. Other means of passing on the infection are also covered if the doctor filling in the form confirms that it is likely to have been how you were infected.
- At the time when you were infected, your spouse or partner either did not know they were infected or you both took reasonable precautions to prevent the infection being transmitted. This requirement does not apply if you were infected by your mother when you were a baby.



Full Eligibility Criteria – New Applicants

For people who were directly infected with HIV by NHS blood, tissue or blood products you should be able to confirm all of the following:

Whilst it is unlikely that someone who was infected with HIV has only just been diagnosed, if you have recently been diagnosed with HIV and have not yet made a claim to WIBSS, you can apply. Please contact WIBSS for further advice and an application form.

Similar to applications for Hepatitis C support, you would need to show the following:

- you are infected with HIV.
- you have not already received any payments from another UK scheme and are not currently eligible to receive funds from another scheme (either MFET or any other scheme that replaces it which is approved by the Welsh Government)
- on the balance of probabilities, you were infected with HIV as a result of receiving treatment in the UK before February 1992 from the NHS in the form of either a blood transfusion, a tissue transplant or blood products. In fact, all NHS blood in Wales was being tested for HIV from autumn 1985 onwards so it is very unlikely (although not impossible) that HIV was transmitted through infected blood after 1985.

Assessing your Claim

In assessing your application, a balance of probabilities approach will be used to consider whether it is probable that you received your infection from infected blood, tissue or blood products rather than any other source. Whilst it is much easier to determine this if you have medical records which show you received a blood transfusion before September 1991, your application may still be approved if you can provide other forms of evidence, such as witness statements or physical evidence that the medical procedure linked to a transfusion has taken place.

WIBSS know that in many cases it will not be possible to trace the specific records related to the transfusion or medical procedure described, so the assessment will always be based on the strength of all the supporting evidence available. If you are unsure, please contact WIBSS to discuss the type of information you have and whether it is likely to be relevant to your case. They can also advise you on how to try to trace any old medical records.

WIBSS will also consider the available evidence regarding which products could have been infected with hepatitis C at the time you received any blood products or a blood transfusion(s) or tissue transplant.



Full Eligibility Criteria – New Applicants

The following could have been infected, although some of these products were made completely safe (for example through heat treatment) before September 1991:

- If you suffer from haemophilia or another bleeding disorder, either Factor VIII or Factor IX blood clotting factor, cryoprecipitate or FEIBA, plasma or any whole blood transfusion.
- If you do not have a bleeding disorder, any blood you received through a blood transfusion, albumin, bone marrow, intravenous immunoglobulin (not including Anti-D), plasma or DEFIX.

On receipt of your application, WIBSS will aim to provide a decision on all applications within 25 working days, although it may take longer if they need to ask you or your doctor for any additional information.